

# The Daily Gazetteer.

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To the DAILY GAZETTEER.

Temple, Saturday, April 28.

SIR,



AM not a little pleas'd to find Mr. D'Anvers's advance a Sentiment in which I can chearfully agree with him; for it is certainly true, as he (on this Occasion very justly) observes, That the Sentiments of the Government, and of the People also, may, in a great Degree, be traced in our *Tragedies* both ancient and modern; and it must be lamented, as one of the many Misfortunes of the Reign of King Charles II. that more than Half the Plays then permitted to appear, breathe nothing but *arbitrary Sway, indefeasable Hereditary Succession, &c. for Freedom*; the *Liberty* there recommended being more properly a *scandalous Licentiousness*, as is but too evident from the *Libertinism and Immorality* that abounds in all the favourite Plays of that Reign.

I must, nevertheless, own, that I cannot well apprehend what Mr. D'Anvers would say, by asserting, "That in Times of publick Prosperity, the Tragick Scenes are adorn'd with the warmest Sentiments that publick Spirit can inspire, and the noblest Panegyric upon those who make the Love of Mankind the glorious Motive of their Undertakings; but if Pride and Meanness fill the Throne, then the Poet arms his Numbers with the infamous Wretches of former Ages, &c." — Since a *Tragick Hero* must necessarily have an *opposite Character*, without which he cannot appear to any considerable Advantage; and we find this so universally the Sense of our *Dramatick Writers*, that scarce one *Tragedy* can be produced as an *Exception to this Rule*: Wherefore I am apt to believe that *Caleb* can only have said this to make his subsequent Quotations read with the more Attention; for he must know, whatever *single Sentences* he may pick out to please his prejudiced *Imagination*, that a *Villain* is, in several of our best Plays, the *principal*, and in many the *favourite Character*, especially in our old *Tragedies*, and more particularly in the Writings of the celebrated *Shakespear*.

Our facetious Countryman, BEN JOHNSON, has furnished the Stage with many Lessons of lasting Use: One of which, in his well-written *Tragedy of CATALINE'S CONSPIRACY*, gives a most lively Representation of a *desperate, disappointed Traitor* in the following Lines.

It is decreed. Nor shall thy Fate, O! Rome,  
Resist my Vow. Two Hills were set on Hills,  
And Seas met Seas to guard thee, I would through:  
— I'd plough up Rocks steep as the Alps in Dust,  
And lave the Tyrrhene Waters into Clouds,  
But I would reach thy Head, thy Head, proud City!  
The Ills that I have done cannot be safe  
But by attempting greater; and I feel  
A Spirit within me chides my sluggish Hands,  
And says they have been innocent too long.

What modern *Address to the People* by the *Conspirators* of our Days can be described with more Strength and Exactness than in the following Lines of *Cataline's Harangue to the Roman Mob*? in which I think Ben has given us the whole *modern Cojole* in Epitome.

Noblest Romans!  
If you were less, or that your Faith and Virtue  
Did not hold good that Title, with your Blood,  
I should not now unprofitably spend  
Myself in Words, or catch at empty Hopes,  
By airy Ways for solid Certainties.  
But since in many and the greatest Dangers  
I still have known you no less true than valiant.—

When I forebink the hard Conditions  
Our State must undergo, unless in Time  
We do redeem ourselves to Liberty,  
And break the Iron Yoke forg'd for our Necks;  
For what less can we call it, when we see  
The Commonwealth engross'd so by a few,  
The Giants of the State, that do by Turns  
Enjoy her.

They have Choice of Houses, Manors, Lordships,  
We scarce a Fire, or a poor Household Lar!  
They buy rare Attick Statues, Tyrian Hangings,  
Ephesian Pictures, and Corinthian Plate!

These Lines in the Mouth of a *prostigate Voluntary*, who having been employ'd one Part of his Life in ruining his own *Fortune*, bent his Thoughts on nothing but the *Ruin of his Country*, shew how clearly the Author saw into the Nature of such Designs, and the common Language on such Occasions, among the *Craftsmen*, and *false Patriots of Rome*, or any other Country; for where the Intentions are the same, the Language will always bear an Affinity; whence it is no Wonder that *Cataline* should speak so much in the Style of our *modern Patriots*; and such was the Influence he had among the unthinking *Vulgar*, that the *Endeavours* of this *prostigate Traitor* would probably have involved the whole *Roman People* in the *Ruin* he and his desperate *Adherents* intended, had not the *Wisdom* of *CICERO*, aided by *Cato*, and the other *Friends of Virtue, Liberty, and of their Country*, by *mild Entreaty*, and the *Help of their own Examples*, (though at the utmost *Peril* of themselves) stem'd the wide *Torrent* of *Confusion* that was on the *Verge* of their *Freedom and Privileges, their Liberties and Lives*. Which may ever serve as a *Caution* to all real *Friends of a Nation*, to weigh deliberately the Complaints raised against the Persons intrusted with the *Governments of publick Affairs*, and carefully to consider who it is that raises them, and what *Views* they have in any proposed Alteration.

The Expression of *Cetegus*, on *drinking Blood* to seal their *dark Contract* against their *Countrymen*, is perfectly agreeable to *Speeches* of a much later Date, in which the *Envy* of designing *Traytors* to the *Friends of the Country* they sought to *destroy*, has often swam uppermost, spite of all their *Arts* to conceal it, by their pretended *Regard for the People*.

— Swell me my Bowl yet fuller,  
Here I do drink this, as I would do *Cato's*  
Or the new *Fellow Cicero's*.

The Advantages promis'd to those who would assist his *black Schemes*, are well described by *Cataline* in the following Lines.

That House is yours, that Land is his; those Waters, Orchards and Walks a third's; he has that Honour, And he that Office

*Cicero's Description of the Office he enjoy'd, with a View only to the Welfare of his Country, well deserves our Notice;*

Great Honours are great Burthens; but on whom They're cast with Envy, he doth wear two Loads. His Cares must still be double to his Joys, In any Dignity, where, if he err, He finds no Pardon; and for doing well, A most small Praise, and that wrung out by Force.

And the Cares attending, and the Capacity necessary for the great *Trusts* he enjoy'd, are very beautifully and elegantly described by *Cato* in the same Play.

— Each petty Hand  
Can steer a Ship becalm'd; but he that will  
Govern and carry her to her Ends, must know  
His Tides, his Currents, how to shift his Sails;  
What she will bear in foul, what in fair Weathers;  
Where her Springs are, her Leaks, and how to stop them;  
What Sands, what Shelves, what Rocks, do threaten her;  
The Forces and the Natures of all Winds,  
Gusts, Storms, and Tempests, when her Keel plunges  
Hell,  
And Deck knocks Heaven: Then to manage her  
Becomes the Name and Office of a Pilot.

Which Description alone is sufficient to shew how unfit an *ancient or modern Cataline*, led by the *single View of his own Interests*, and hurried on by the *Impetuosity of his Passions*, must be for so great a *Charge*.

*Cicero's Appeal to the misled Tools of the Faction* is equally just and pathetic.

If you would bear, and change your savage Minds  
Leave to be mad; forsake your Purposes  
Of Treason, Rapine, Murder, Fire and Horror;

The Commonwealth bath Eyes, that wake as sharply  
Over her Life, as yours do for her Ruin.  
Be not deceived to think her Lenity  
Will be perpetual; or, if Men be wanting,  
The Gods will be to such a calling Cause.  
Consider your Attempts, and while there's Time,  
Repent you of them. It doth make me tremble  
There should those Spirits breathe, that when they cannot  
Live honestly would rather perish basely.

Mr. Rowe's *TAMERLANE* can scarcely be too much admir'd: For in it is contained, beside the most God-like *Courage and Resolution*, every humane and generous Sentiment that can render a Prince worthy the *Love and Esteem* of his Subjects, who never speaks of *War*, but as a *desperate Means* of serving *Mankind*.

Ob thou fell Monster, War! that in a Moment  
Layst waste the noblest Part of the Creation,  
The Beast and Master-piece of the great Maker,  
That wears in vain th' Impression of his Image  
Unprivileg'd from thee.

And the terrible Effects of Arms are no less pathetically described in the *Invasion of Bajazet*:

— To waste with Sword and Fire their fruitful Fields,  
Like some accursed Fiend, who, 'scap'd from Hell,  
Poisons the balmy Air through which he flies,  
He blasts the bearded Corn, and loaded Branches,  
The lab'ring Hind's best Hope, and marks his Way with  
Ruin.

Whence, according to Mr. D'Anvers's Observation, it is apparent, that at the Time this Play was written, (which was, I think, during the most hostile Part of King WILLIAM's Reign) *War* was looked upon as the *very last Resource for a free well-govern'd People*. — A *restless, perfidious Disturber of Mankind* is well drawn in the following two Lines from the same Play:

Whose Faith, so often given, and always violated,  
Have been th' Offence of Heaven, and Plague of Earth.

Mr. Addison's *CATO* certainly abounds with Allusions to the Time it was written in; one of which, in the Mouth of *Sempronius*, is very remarkable.

— I'll conceal  
My Thoughts in Passion, ('tis the surest Way)  
I'll bellow out for Rome, and for my Country,  
And mouth at Caesar, till I shake the Senate,  
Your cold Hypocrify's a stale Device,  
A worn-out Trick; wouldst thou be thought in earnest,  
Cloath thy feign'd Zeal in Rage, in Fire, in Fury!

What can more exactly tally with the Cry of a certain *Popish Incendiary* a few Weeks ago, than the following Words:

At length the Winds are rais'd, the Storm blows high;  
Be it your Care, my Friends, to keep it up  
In its full Fury, and direct it right,  
Till it has spent itself on *CATO's Head*.

And no less worthy Notice is *Cato's Speech* to the *Leaders of the Mutiny*; in which the *true Patriot* shines far above all the *false Trappings* of his *Enemies*.

Do you confess 'twas not a Zeal for Rome,  
Nor Love of Liberty, nor Thirst of Honour,  
Drew you thus far; but Hopes to share the Spoll  
Of conquer'd Towns, and plunder'd Provinces?  
Fir'd with such Motives, you do well to join  
With *CATO's Foes*.

Bold my Breast is naked to your Swords,  
And let the Man that's injur'd, strike the Blow,  
Which of you all suspects that he is wrong'd,  
Or thinks he suffer'd greater Ills than *CATO*?  
Am I distinguish'd from you but by 'Tis,  
Superior Toils, and heavier Weight of Cares!  
Painful Pre-eminence!

What *Sempronius* says to the *Abettors of his Perfidy*, may serve as a *Lesson* to all who are not willing to be deceived by the *secret Enemies of their Peace and Tranquillity*; for we have seen but too many Confirmations of the *Truth* of what he asserts.

Know, Villains, when such paltry Slaves presume,  
To mix in Treason, if the Plot succeed,  
They're thrown neglected by: But if it fails,  
They're sure to die like Dogs, as you shall do.

